

# California M E D I C I N E

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## EDITORIALS

### A Stronger Front Against State Medicine

Now that the 1947 Legislature has convened and Governor Warren has announced his new attempt to foist a compulsory health insurance scheme on the people of California, the obligation of medicine has again been made clear. It is up to the medical profession to protect the citizens of the state from the deleterious effects that the Governor's program would have on the health of the people.

Medicine's answer to state medicine was reaffirmed at the outset of the campaign in the state Legislature in 1945. It was in the form of a program of public education in the wholesomeness of voluntary prepaid health insurance as exemplified by California Physicians' Service. That program grew in effectiveness as the profession provided the funds necessary to carry it out.

Behind the program is the authority of experience. Several years before politicians began to look upon compulsory health insurance as a comfortable vehicle, the medical profession in California had recognized and acted to meet the need for a means by which citizens might forfend the sudden descent upon themselves of overburdensome medical care costs. It is indicative of public attitude that California Physicians' Service, which was established eight years ago as a voluntary medical care prepayment plan to meet that need, has had a greater enrollment of new members in the two years since Governor Warren first began plumping for compulsory health insurance than it did in the preceding six years of its existence. Supporters of the Warren scheme who found it easy in 1945 to scoff at a C.P.S. membership of 100,000 as considerable will have difficulty in explaining the increase to a present enrollment of more than 400,000 during a time when it must have been obvious to all enrollees that another attempt would be made to push through a compulsory health insurance measure. Moreover, commercial insurance companies have recorded a similar growth on a

much larger scale and it is safe to estimate today that probably half the citizens of California have already acted to protect their resources against the rainy day of the need for medical care.

Fortunately, business, agriculture and other interests have shown such an overwhelming opposition to the health insurance plans of the chief executive that the job of combating compulsion will not fall entirely on the shoulders of the doctors. Medicine does not want a system of state medicine because of the degeneration of medical practice which would follow. Business does not want new taxes, nor does it want a start made on the regimentation of private enterprise. Agriculture also falls into the private enterprise class, and the many others who came forward in 1945 have equally good reasons for opposing this start at sovietizing our economy.

These figures and facts cannot be laughed off by even the most ardent advocate of state-ism. They are an expression of public attitude and they add to the record of public repudiation of controlled economy. There are some things in government of which the public has "had enough."

Now the governing bodies of the California Medical Association have voted to oppose the 1947 version of compulsory health insurance in the state capitol. In addition to having many strong allies in a struggle against compulsion, medicine in its own organization is much better equipped to fight than it was in 1945. During the intervening two years, medicine has solidified its ranks. It has accumulated much experience in meeting the left wing thrust of government regulated economy. It has gathered many friends and it has equipped itself financially to mount a counterattack. The determination to defeat the measure is the same as it was two years ago. The prospect that this can be done is at least as good as it was then, if not better.